

## EVALUATION OF VETERINARY SERVICES

### Article 1.3.3.1.

The quality of the *Veterinary Services* depends on a set of factors, which include fundamental principles of an ethical, organisational and technical nature. The *Veterinary Services* shall conform to these fundamental principles, regardless of the political, economic or social situation of their country.

Compliance with these fundamental principles by the *Veterinary Services* of a Member Country is important to the establishment and maintenance of confidence in its *international veterinary certificates* by the *Veterinary Services* of other Member Countries.

The same fundamental principles should apply in countries where the responsibility for establishing or applying certain animal health measures, or issuing some *international veterinary certificates* is exercised by an organisation other than the *Veterinary Services*, or by an authority or agency on behalf of the *Veterinary Services*. In all cases, the *Veterinary Services* retain ultimate responsibility for application of these principles [decision making].

These fundamental principles are presented in Article 1.3.3.2. The remaining factors of quality are described in Part 1 (notification, principles of certification, etc.) and the document entitled "Guidelines for the evaluation of Veterinary Services" included in Chapter 1.3.4.

The quality of *Veterinary Services* can be measured through an evaluation, whose general principles are described in Articles 1.3.3.3. and 1.3.3.4.

### Article 1.3.3.2.

#### **Fundamental principles of quality**

The *Veterinary Services* shall comply with the following principles to ensure the quality of their activities:

1. Professional judgement

The officials of *Veterinary Services* should have the relevant qualifications, scientific expertise and experience to give them the competence to make sound professional judgements.

2. Independence

Care shall be taken to ensure that *Veterinary Services'* staff are free from any commercial, financial, hierarchical, political or other pressures which might affect their judgement or decisions.

3. Impartiality

The *Veterinary Services* shall be impartial. In particular, all the parties affected by their activities have a right to expect their services to be delivered under reasonable and non-discriminatory conditions.

4. Integrity

The *Veterinary Services* shall guarantee that the work of each of their officials is of a consistently high level of integrity. Any fraud, corruption or falsification shall be identified and corrected.

5. Objectivity

The *Veterinary Services* shall at all times act in an objective, transparent and non-discriminatory manner.

6. General organisation

The *Veterinary Services* must be able to demonstrate by means of an appropriate legislation and organisation that they are in a position to have control of the establishment and application of animal health measures, and of international veterinary certification activities. In particular, they shall define and document the responsibilities and structure of the organisations in charge of the animal identification system, control of animal movements, animal disease control and reporting systems, epidemiological surveillance and communication of epidemiological information.

A similar demonstration should be made by *Veterinary Services* when they are in charge of veterinary public health activities.

The *Veterinary Services* shall have at their disposal effective systems for animal disease surveillance and for *notification* of disease problems wherever they occur, in accordance with the provisions of the *Code*. Adequate coverage of animal populations should also be demonstrated. They shall at all times endeavour to improve their performance in terms of animal health information systems and animal disease control.

The *Veterinary Services* shall define and document the responsibilities and structure of the organisation (in particular the chain of command) in charge of issuing *international veterinary certificates*.

Each position within the *Veterinary Services* which has an impact on their quality shall be described. These job descriptions shall include the requirements for education, training, technical knowledge and experience.

7. Quality policy

The *Veterinary Services* shall define and document their policy and objectives for, and commitment to, quality, and shall ensure that this policy is understood, implemented and maintained at all levels in the organisation. Where conditions allow, they may implement a quality system corresponding to their areas of activity and appropriate for the type, range and volume of work that they have to perform. The guidelines for the quality and evaluation of *Veterinary Services* propose a suitable reference system, which should be used if a Member Country choose to adopt a quality system.

8. Procedures and standards

The *Veterinary Services* shall develop and document appropriate procedures and standards for the implementation and management of animal health measures and international veterinary certification activities. These procedures and standards may for example relate to:

- a) programming and management of activities, including international veterinary certification activities;
- b) prevention and control of disease *outbreaks*;
- c) risk analysis, epidemiological surveillance and zoning;

- d) inspection and sampling techniques;
- e) diagnostic tests for animal diseases;
- f) preparation, production and control of biological products for use in the diagnosis or prevention of diseases
- g) border controls and import regulations;
- h) disinfection and disinsectisation;
- i) treatments intended to destroy, if appropriate, pathogens in animal products.

Inasmuch as the OIE has adopted standards on these matters, the *Veterinary Services* shall comply with these standards when applying animal health measures and when issuing *international veterinary certificates*.

#### 9. Information, complaints and appeals

The *Veterinary Administration* shall undertake to reply to legitimate requests from *Veterinary Administrations* of other Member Countries or any other authority, in particular ensuring that any requests for information, complaints or appeals that they may present are dealt with in a timely manner.

A record shall be maintained of all complaints and appeals and of the relevant action taken by the *Veterinary Services*.

#### 10. Documentation

The *Veterinary Services* shall have at their disposal a reliable and up to date documentation system suited to their activities.

#### 11. Self-evaluation

The *Veterinary Services* should undertake periodical self-evaluation especially by documenting achievements against goals, and demonstrating the efficiency of their organisational components and resource adequacy.

A Member Country can request the Director General of the OIE to arrange for an expert or experts to assist in the process.

#### 12. Communication

*Veterinary Services* should have effective internal and external systems of communication covering administrative and technical staff levels and parties affected by their activities.

#### Article 1.3.3.3.

For the purposes of the *Code*, every Member Country shall recognise the right of another Member Country to undertake, or request it to undertake, an evaluation of its *Veterinary Services* where the initiating Member Country is an actual or a prospective importer or exporter of *commodities* and where the evaluation is to be a component of a risk analysis process which is to be used to determine or review sanitary measures which apply to such trade.

Any evaluation of *Veterinary Services* should be conducted having regard to the OIE Guidelines for the evaluation of *Veterinary Services* presented in Chapter 1.3.4. of this *Code*.

A Member Country has the right to expect that the evaluation of its *Veterinary Services* will be conducted in an objective manner. A Member Country undertaking evaluation should be able to justify any measure taken as a consequence of its evaluation.

Article 1.3.3.4.

A Member Country which intends to conduct an evaluation of another Member Country's *Veterinary Services* shall give them notice in writing. This notice should define the purpose of the evaluation and details of the information required.

On receipt of a formal request for information to enable an evaluation of its *Veterinary Services* by another Member Country, and following bilateral agreement of the evaluation process and criteria, a Member Country should expeditiously provide the other country with meaningful and accurate information of the type requested.

The evaluation process should take into account the fundamental principles and other factors of quality laid down in Articles 1.3.3.1. and 1.3.3.2. It should also take into consideration the specific circumstances regarding quality, as described in Article 1.3.3.1., prevailing in the countries concerned.

The outcome of the evaluation conducted by a Member Country should be provided in writing as soon as possible, and in any case within 4 months of receipt of the relevant information, to the Member Country which has undergone the evaluation. The evaluation report should detail any findings which affect trade prospects. The Member Country which conducts the evaluation should clarify in detail any points of the evaluation on request.

In the event of a dispute between two Member Countries over the conduct or the conclusions of the evaluation of the *Veterinary Services*, the matter should be dealt with having regard to the procedures set out in Article 1.3.1.4.

CHAPTER 1.3.4.

**GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF  
VETERINARY SERVICES**

Article 1.3.4.1.

**General considerations**

1. Evaluation of *Veterinary Services* is an important element in the risk analysis process which countries may legitimately use in their policy formulations directly applying to animal health and sanitary controls of *international trade in animals*, animal-derived products, animal genetic material and animal feedstuffs.

Any evaluation should be carried out with due regard for Chapter 1.3.3. of this *Code*.

2. In order to ensure that objectivity is maximised in the evaluation process, it is essential for some standards of discipline to be applied. The OIE has developed these guidelines which can be practically applied to the evaluation of *Veterinary Services*. These are relevant for evaluation of the *Veterinary Services* of one country by those of another country for the purposes of risk analysis in *international trade*. The guidelines are also applicable for evaluation by a country of its own *Veterinary Services* – the process known as self-evaluation or self-assessment– and for periodic re-evaluation.

In carrying out a risk analysis prior to deciding the sanitary/zoosanitary conditions for the importation of a commodity, an *importing country* is justified in regarding its evaluation of the *Veterinary Services* of the *exporting country* as critical.

3. The purpose of evaluation may be either to assist a national authority in the decision-making process regarding priorities to be given to its own *Veterinary Services* (self-evaluation) or to assist the process of risk analysis in *international trade in animals* and animal-derived products to which official sanitary and/or zoosanitary controls apply.
4. In both situations, the evaluation should demonstrate that the *Veterinary Services* have the capability for effective control of the sanitary and zoosanitary status of *animals* and animal products. Key elements to be covered in this process include resource adequacy, management capability, legislative and administrative infrastructures, independence in the exercise of official functions and performance history, including disease reporting.
5. Competence and integrity are qualities on which others base their confidence in individuals or organisations. Mutual confidence between relevant official *Veterinary Services* of trading partner countries contributes fundamentally to stability in *international trade in animals* and animal-related products. In this situation, scrutiny is directed more at the *exporting country* than at the *importing country*.
6. Although quantitative data can be provided on *Veterinary Services*, the ultimate evaluation will be essentially qualitative. While it is appropriate to evaluate resources and infrastructure (organisational, administrative and legislative), it is also appropriate to place emphasis on the evaluation of the quality of outputs and performance of *Veterinary Services*. Evaluation should take into consideration any [formally-based] quality systems used by *Veterinary Services*.

#### Appendix IV (contd)

7. An *importing country* has a right of assurance that information on sanitary/zoosanitary situations provided by the *Veterinary Services* of an *exporting country* is objective, meaningful and correct. Furthermore, the *Veterinary Services* of the *importing country* are entitled to expect validity in the veterinary certification of export.
8. An *exporting country* is entitled to expect that its *animals* and animal products will receive reasonable and valid treatment when they are subjected to import inspection in the country of destination. The country should also be able to expect that any evaluation of its standards and performance will be conducted on a non-discriminatory basis. The *importing country* should be prepared and able to defend any position which it takes as a consequence of the evaluation.

#### Article 1.3.4.2.

### **Scope**

1. In the evaluation of *Veterinary Services*, the following items may be considered, depending on the purpose of the evaluation:
  - organisation, structure and authority of the *Veterinary Services*
  - human resources
  - material (including financial) resources
  - functional capabilities and legislative support
  - animal health and veterinary public health controls
  - formal quality systems including quality policy
  - performance assessment and audit programmes
  - participation in OIE activities and compliance with OIE Member Countries' obligations.
2. Article 1.3.4.13. outlines appropriate information requirements for:
  - self-evaluation by national *Veterinary Services* which perceive a need to prepare information for national or international purposes;
  - evaluation by a prospective or actual *importing country* of the *Veterinary Services* of a prospective or actual *exporting country*;
  - verification or re-verification of an evaluation in the course of a visit to the *exporting country* by the *importing country*.

#### Article 1.3.4.3.

### **Evaluation criteria for the organisational structure of the Veterinary Services**

1. A key element in the evaluation is the study of the organisation and structure of the official *Veterinary Services*. The *Veterinary Services* should define and set out their policy, objectives and commitment to quality systems and standards. These organisational and policy statements should be described in detail. Organisational charts and details of functional responsibilities of staff should be available for evaluation. The role and responsibility of the Chief Veterinary

Officer/Veterinary Director should be clearly defined. Lines of command should also be described.

2. The organisational structure should also clearly set out the interface relationships of government Ministers and departmental Authorities with the Chief Veterinary Officer/Veterinary Director and the *Veterinary Services*. Formal relationships with statutory authorities and with industry organisations and associations should also be described. It is recognised that Services may be subject to changes in structure from time to time. Major changes should be notified to trading partners so that the effects of re-structuring may be assessed.
3. Organisational components of *Veterinary Services* which have responsibility for key functional capabilities should be identified. These capabilities include epidemiological surveillance, disease control, import controls, animal disease reporting systems, animal identification systems, traceability systems, animal movement control systems, communication of epidemiological information, training, [and] inspection and certification. Laboratory and field systems and their organisational relationships should be described.
4. To reinforce the reliability and credibility of their services, the *Veterinary Services* may have set up quality systems that correspond with their fields of activity and to the nature and scale of activities that they carry out. Evaluation of such systems should be as objective as possible.
5. The *Veterinary Administration* alone speaks for the country as far as official international dialogue is concerned. This is also particularly important to cases where zoning and regionalisation are being applied. The responsibilities of the national *Veterinary Administration* and all *Veterinary Authorities* in that country should be made clear in the process of evaluation of *Veterinary Services*.
6. A *Veterinary Authority* is defined in Chapter 1.1.1. of this *Code*. As some countries have some official veterinary authority roles vested in autonomous sub-national (state/provincial, municipal) government bodies, there is an important need to assess the role and function of these Services. Details of their roles, relationship (legal and administrative) to each other and to the national *Veterinary Services* should be available for evaluation. Annual reports, review findings and access to other information pertinent to the animal health activities of such bodies should also be available.
7. Similarly, where the national *Veterinary Services* have arrangements with other providers of relevant services such as universities, laboratories, information services, etc., these arrangements should also be described. For the purposes of evaluation, it is appropriate to expect that the quality of organisational and functional standards which apply to *Veterinary Services* should also apply to the services of these other providers.

#### Article 1.3.4.4.

### **Evaluation criteria for quality systems**

1. The *Veterinary Services* should demonstrate a commitment to the quality of the processes and outputs of their services. Where services or components of services are delivered under a formal quality systems programme which is based on OIE recommended standards or, especially in the case of laboratory components of *Veterinary Services* other internationally recognised quality standards, the *Veterinary Services* undergoing evaluation should make available evidence of

accreditation, details of the documented quality processes and documented outcomes of all relevant audits undertaken.

2. Where the *Veterinary Services* undergoing evaluation make large use of formal quality systems in the delivery of their services, it is appropriate that greater emphasis be placed on the outcomes of evaluation of these quality systems than on the resource and infrastructural components of the services.

#### Article 1.3.4.5.

### **Evaluation criteria for human resources**

1. The *Veterinary Services* should demonstrate that their human resource component includes an integral core of full-time civil service employees. This core must include graduate veterinarians. It should also include other qualified professional officers, administrative officials and technical support staff. This does not exclude the possibility of employing, in addition, part-time veterinary and para-veterinary staff and private sector veterinarians. It is essential that all the above categories of staff be subject to legal disciplinary provisions. Data relating to the resource base of the *Veterinary Services* undergoing evaluation should be available.
2. In addition to raw quantitative data on this resource base, the functions of the various categories of staff in the *Veterinary Services* should be described in detail. This is necessary for analysis and estimation of the appropriateness of the application of qualified skills to the tasks undertaken by the *Veterinary Services* and may be relevant, for example, to the roles of veterinary and animal health technical assistants in field services. In this case, the evaluation should provide assurances that disease monitoring is being conducted by a sufficient number of qualified, experienced field veterinarians who are directly involved in farm visits; there should not be an over-reliance on technical assistant staff for this task.
3. Analysis of these data can be used to estimate the potential of the *Veterinary Services* to have reliable knowledge of the state of animal health in the country and to support an optimal level of animal disease control programmes. A large population of private practitioners would not provide the *Veterinary Services* with an effective epizootiological information base without legislative (e.g. compulsory reporting of notifiable diseases) and administrative (e.g. official animal health surveillance and reporting systems) mechanisms in place.
4. These data should be assessed in close conjunction with the other information described in this document. For example, a large field staff (veterinarians and animal health technical assistants) need fixed, mobile and budgetary resources for animal health activities in the livestock farming territory of the country. If deficiencies are evident, there would be reason to challenge the validity of epizootiological information.

#### Article 1.3.4.6.

### **Evaluation criteria for material resources**

1. Financial

Actual yearly budgetary information regarding the *Veterinary Services* should be available and should include the details set out in the model questionnaire outlined in Article 1.3.4.13. Information is required on conditions of service for veterinary staff (including salaries and incentives) and should provide a comparison with the private sector and perhaps with other



professionals. Information should also be available on non-government sources of revenue available to veterinarians in their official responsibilities.

## 2. Administrative

### a) Accommodation

The *Veterinary Services* should be accommodated in premises suitable for efficient performance of their functions. The component parts of the *Veterinary Services* should be located as closely as possible to each other at the central level, and in the regions where they are represented, in order to facilitate efficient internal communication and function.

### b) Communications

The *Veterinary Services* should be able to demonstrate that they have reliable access to effective communications systems, especially for animal health surveillance and control programmes. Inadequate communications systems within the field services components of these programmes or between outlying offices and headquarters, or between the *Veterinary Services* and other relevant administrative and professional services, signify an inherent weakness in these programmes. Adequate communications systems between laboratories and between field and laboratory components of the *Veterinary Services* should also be demonstrated.

Examples of types of communications which should be routinely available on an adequate country-wide basis are national postal, freight and telephone networks. Rapid courier services, facsimile and electronic data interchange systems (e.g. e-mail and Internet services) are examples of useful communication services which, if available, can supplement or replace the others. A means for rapid international communication should be available to the national *Veterinary Services*, to permit reporting of changes in national disease status consistent with OIE recommendations and to allow bilateral contact on urgent matters with counterpart *Veterinary Services* in trading-partner countries.

### c) Transport Systems

The availability of sufficient reliable transport facilities is essential for the performance of many functions of *Veterinary Services*. This applies particularly to the field services components of animal health activities (e.g. emergency response visits). Otherwise, the *Veterinary Services* cannot assure counterpart services in other countries that they are in control of the animal health situation within the country.

Appropriate means of transport are also vital for the satisfactory receipt of samples to be tested at veterinary laboratories, for inspection of imports and exports, and for the performance of animal and animal product inspection in outlying production or processing establishments.

## 3. Technical

Details available on laboratories should include resources data, programmes under way as well as those recently completed and review reports on the role or functions of the laboratory. Information as described in the model questionnaire should be used in the evaluation of laboratory services.

a) Cold chain for laboratory samples and veterinary medicines

Adequate refrigeration and freezing systems should be available and should be used throughout the country to provide suitable low temperature protection for laboratory samples in transit or awaiting analysis, as well as veterinary medical products (e.g. vaccines) when these are required for use in animal disease control programmes. If these assurances cannot be given, it may be valid to discount many types of test results, as well as the effectiveness of certain disease control programmes and the export inspection system in the country undergoing evaluation.

b) Diagnostic laboratories

Analysis of the laboratory service component of *Veterinary Services*, which would include official governmental laboratories and other laboratories accredited by the *Veterinary Services* for specified purposes, is an essential element of the evaluation process. The quality of the veterinary diagnostic laboratories of a country underpins the whole control and certification processes of the zoosanitary/sanitary status of exported *animals* and animal products, and therefore these laboratories should be subject to rigid quality assurance procedures and should use international quality assurance programmes (wherever available) for standardising test methodologies and testing proficiency. An example is the use of International Standard Sera for standardising reagents.

This emphasis is valid whether one relates it to the actual testing performed on individual export consignments or to the more broad and ongoing testing regimes which are used to determine the animal health and veterinary public health profiles of the country and to support its disease control programmes. For the purposes of evaluation, veterinary diagnostic laboratories include those which are concerned with either animal health or veterinary public health activities. [These laboratories must be approved and designated by the *Veterinary Services* for such purposes, and regular audits carried out.] The *Veterinary Services* must approve and designate these laboratories for such purposes and have them audited regularly.

c) Research

The scope of animal disease and veterinary public health problems in the country concerned, the stages reached in the controls which address those problems and their relative importance can be measured to some degree by analysis of information on government priorities and programmes for research in animal health. This information should be accessible for evaluation purposes.

Article 1.3.4.7.

## **Functional capabilities and legislative support**

### **1. Animal health and veterinary public health**

The *Veterinary Services* should be able to demonstrate that they have the capacity, supported by appropriate legislation, to exercise control over all animal health matters. These controls should include, where appropriate, compulsory notification of prescribed animal diseases, inspection, movement controls including registration of holdings and animal identification, quarantine of infected premises/areas, testing, treatment, destruction of infected *animals* or contaminated materials, controls over the use of veterinary medicines, etc. The scope of the legislative controls should include domestic *animals* and their reproductive material, animal products, wildlife as it relates to the transmission of diseases to domestic *animals*, and other products subject to veterinary inspection. Arrangements should exist for co-operation with the veterinary authorities of the neighbouring countries for the control of animal diseases in border areas. Information on

the veterinary public health legislation covering the production of products of animal origin for national consumption may be also considered in the evaluation.

2. Export/import inspection

National *Veterinary Services* should have appropriate legislation and adequate capabilities to prescribe the methods for control and to exercise systematic control over the import and export processes of *animals* and animal products in so far as this control relates to sanitary and zoosanitary matters. The evaluation should also involve the consideration of administrative instructions to ensure the enforcement of *importing country* requirements during the pre-export period.

In the context of production for export of foodstuffs of animal origin, the *Veterinary Services* should demonstrate that comprehensive legislative provisions are available for the oversight by the relevant authorities of the hygienic process and to support official inspection systems of these commodities which function to standards consistent with or equivalent to relevant Codex Alimentarius and OIE standards.

Control systems should be in place which permit the exporting *Veterinary Authorities* to approve export premises. The *Veterinary Services* should also be able to conduct testing and treatment as well as to exercise controls over the movement, handling and storage of exports and to make inspections at any stage of the export process. The product scope of this export legislation should include, *inter alia*, *animals* and animal products (including animal semen, ova and embryos), and animal feedstuffs.

The national *Veterinary Services* should be able to demonstrate that they have adequate capabilities and legislative support for zoosanitary control of imports and transit of *animals*, animal products and other materials which may introduce animal diseases. This could be necessary to support claims by the *Veterinary Services* that the animal health status of the country is suitably stable, and that cross-contamination of exports from imports of unknown or less favourable zoosanitary status is unlikely. The same considerations should apply in respect of veterinary control of public health. The *Veterinary Services* should be able to demonstrate that there is no conflict of interest when certifying veterinarians are performing official duties.

Legislation should also provide the right to deny and/or withdraw official certification. Penalty provisions applying to malpractice on the part of certifying officials should be included.

The *Veterinary Services* should demonstrate that they are capable of providing accurate and valid certification for exports of *animals* and animal products, based on Section 1.2 of the *Code*. They should have appropriately organised procedures which ensure that sanitary/animal health certificates are issued by efficient and secure methods. The documentation control system should be able to correlate reliably the certification details with the relevant export consignments and with any inspections to which the consignments were subjected.

Security in the export certification process, including electronic documentation transfer, is important. A system of independent compliance review is desirable, to safeguard against fraud in certification by officials and by private individuals or corporations. The certifying veterinarian should have no conflict of interest in the commercial aspects of the animal or product being certified and be independent from the commercial parties.

## **Animal health controls**

### **1. Animal health status**

An updated assessment of the present animal disease status of a country is an important and necessary procedure. For this undertaking, studies of the OIE publications such as *World Animal Health*, the *Bulletin* and *Disease Information* must be fundamental reference points. The evaluation should consider the recent history of the compliance of the country with its obligations regarding international notification of animal diseases. In the case of an OIE Member Country, failure to provide the necessary animal health reports consistent with OIE requirements will detract from the overall outcome of the evaluation of the country.

An *exporting country* should be able to provide further, detailed elaboration of any elements of its animal disease status as reported to the OIE. This additional information will have particular importance in the case of animal diseases which are foreign to or strictly controlled in the *importing country* or region. The ability of the *Veterinary Services* to substantiate elements of their animal disease status reports with surveillance data, results of monitoring programmes and details of disease history is highly relevant to the evaluation. In the case of evaluation of the *Veterinary Services* of an *exporting country* for *international trade* purposes, an *importing country* should be able to demonstrate the reasonableness of its request and expectations in this process.

### **2. Animal health control**

Details of current animal disease control programmes should be considered in the evaluation. These programmes would include epidemiological surveillance, official government-administered or officially-endorsed, industry-administered control or eradication programmes for specific diseases or disease complexes, and animal disease emergency preparedness. Details should include enabling legislation, programme plans for epidemiological surveillance and animal disease emergency responses, quarantine arrangements for infected and exposed animals or herds, compensation provisions for animal owners affected by disease control measures, training programmes, physical and other barriers between the free country or zone and those infected, incidence and prevalence data, resource commitments, interim results and programme review reports.

### **3. National animal disease reporting systems**

The presence of a functional animal disease reporting system which covers all agricultural regions of the country and all veterinary administrative control areas should be demonstrated.

An acceptable variation would be the application of this principle to specific zones of the country. In this case also, the animal disease reporting system should cover each of these zones. Other factors should come to bear on this situation, e.g. the ability to satisfy trading partners that sound animal health controls exist to prevent the introduction of disease or export products from regions of lesser veterinary control.

### **Veterinary public health controls**

#### **1. Food hygiene**

The national *Veterinary Services* should be able to demonstrate effective responsibility for the veterinary public health programmes relating to the production and processing of animal products, especially for export. If the national *Veterinary Services* do not exercise responsibility over these programmes, the evaluation should include a comprehensive review of the role and relationship of the organisations (national, state/provincial, and municipal) which are involved. In such a case, the evaluation should consider whether the national *Veterinary Services* can provide guarantees of responsibility for and effective control of the sanitary status of animal products prior to export, especially *meat* and *meat products* throughout the slaughter, processing, transport and storage periods.

#### **2. Zoonoses**

Within the structure of *Veterinary Services*, there should be appropriately qualified staff whose responsibilities include the monitoring and control of zoonotic diseases and, where appropriate, liaison with medical authorities.

3. Chemical residue testing programmes

Adequacy of controls over chemical residues in exported *animals*, animal products and feedstuffs should be demonstrated. Statistically-based surveillance and monitoring programmes for environmental and other chemical contaminants in *animals*, in animal-derived foodstuffs and in animal feedstuffs should be favourably noted. These programmes should be coordinated nationwide. Correlated results should be freely available on request to existing and prospective trading partner countries. Analytical methods and result reporting should be consistent with internationally recognised standards. If official responsibility for these programmes does not rest with the *Veterinary Services*, there should be appropriate provision to ensure that the results of such programmes are made available to the *Veterinary Services* for assessment.

4. Veterinary medicines

It should be acknowledged that primary control over veterinary medicinal products may not rest with the veterinary authorities in some countries, owing to differences between governments in the division of legislative responsibilities. However, for the purpose of evaluation, the *Veterinary Services* should be able to demonstrate the existence of effective controls (including nationwide consistency of application) over the registration, supply and use of veterinary medicines, biologicals and diagnostic reagents. The control of veterinary medicines has direct relevance to the areas of animal health and public health.

In the animal health sphere, this has particular application to biological products. Inadequate controls on the registration and use of biological products leave the *Veterinary Services* open to challenge over the quality of animal disease control programmes and over safeguards against animal disease introduction in imported veterinary biological products.

It is valid, for evaluation purposes, to seek assurances of effective government controls over veterinary medicines in so far as these relate to the public health risks associated with residues of these chemicals in *animals* and animal-derived foodstuffs. This process should be consistent with the standards set by the Codex Alimentarius or with alternative requirements set by the *importing country* where the latter are scientifically justified.

5. Integration between animal health controls and veterinary public health

The existence of any organised programme which incorporates a structured system of information feedback from inspection in fresh meat or dairy product establishments and applies this in animal health control should be favourably noted. Such programmes should be integrated within a national epizootiological surveillance scheme.

*Veterinary Services* which direct a significant element of their animal health programmes specifically towards minimising microbial and chemical contamination of animal-derived products in the human food chain should receive favourable recognition in the evaluation. There should be evident linkage between these programmes and the official control of veterinary medicines and relevant agricultural chemicals.

## **Performance assessment and audit programmes**

### **1. Strategic plans**

The objectives and priorities of the *Veterinary Services* can be well evaluated if there is a published official strategic plan which is regularly updated. Understanding of functional activities is enhanced if an operational plan is maintained within the context of the strategic plan. The strategic and operational plans, if these exist, should be included in the evaluation.

*Veterinary Services* which use strategic and operational plans may be better able to demonstrate effective management than countries without such plans.

### **2. Performance assessment**

If a strategic plan is used, it is desirable to have a process which allows the organisation to assess its own performance against its objectives. Performance indicators and the outcomes of any review to measure achievements against pre-determined performance indicators should be available for evaluation. The results should be considered in the evaluation process.

### **3. Compliance**

Matters which can interfere with compliance and adversely affect a favourable evaluation include instances of inaccurate or misleading official certification, evidence of fraud, corruption, or interference by higher political levels in international veterinary certification.

It is desirable that the *Veterinary Services* contain (or have a formal linkage with) an independent internal unit/section/commission the function of which is to critically scrutinise their operations. The aim of this unit should be to ensure consistent and high integrity in the work of the individual officials in the *Veterinary Services* and of the corporate body itself. The existence of such a body can be important to the establishment of international confidence in the *Veterinary Services*.

An important feature when demonstrating the integrity of the *Veterinary Services* is their ability to take corrective action when miscertification, fraud or corruption has occurred.

A supplementary or an alternative process for setting performance standards and application of monitoring and audit is the implementation of formal quality systems to some or all activities for which the *Veterinary Services* are responsible. Formal accreditation to international quality system standards should be utilised if recognition in the evaluation process is to be sought.

### **4. Veterinary Services administration**

#### **a) Annual reports**

Official government annual reports should be published, which provide information on the organisation and structure, budget, activities and contemporary performance of the *Veterinary Services*. Current and retrospective copies of such reports should be available to counterpart Services in other countries, especially trade partners.

b) Reports of government review bodies

The reports of any periodic or ad hoc government reviews of *Veterinary Services* or of particular functions or roles of the *Veterinary Services* should be considered in the evaluation process. Details of action taken as a consequence of the review should also be accessible.

c) Reports of special committees of enquiry or independent review bodies

Recent reports on the *Veterinary Services* or elements of their role or function, and details of any subsequent implementation of recommendations contained in these reports should be available. The *Veterinary Services* concerned should recognise that the provision of such information need not be detrimental to the evaluation outcome; in fact, it may demonstrate evidence of an effective audit and response programme. The supplying of such information can reinforce a commitment to transparency.

d) In-service training and development programme for staff

In order to maintain a progressive approach to meeting the needs and challenges of the changing domestic and international role of *Veterinary Services*, the national administration should have in place an organised programme which provides appropriate training across a range of subjects for relevant staff. This programme should include participation in scientific meetings of animal health organisations. Such a programme should be used in assessing the effectiveness of the Services.

e) Publications

*Veterinary Services* can augment their reputation by demonstrating that their staff publish scientific articles in refereed veterinary journals or other publications.

f) Formal linkages with sources of independent scientific expertise

Details of formal consultation or advisory mechanisms in place and operating between the *Veterinary Services* and local and international universities, scientific institutions or recognised veterinary organisations should be taken into consideration. These could serve to enhance the international recognition of the *Veterinary Services*.

g) Trade performance history

In the evaluation of the *Veterinary Services* of a country, it is pertinent to examine the recent history of their performance and integrity in trade dealings with other countries. Sources of such historical data may include Customs Services.

Article 1.3.4.11.

## **Participation in OIE activities**

Questions on a country's adherence to its obligations as a member of the OIE are relevant to an evaluation of the *Veterinary Services* of the country. Self-acknowledged inability or repeated failure of a Member Country to fulfil reporting obligations to the OIE will detract from the overall outcome of the evaluation. Such countries, as well as non-member countries, will need to provide extensive information regarding their *Veterinary Services* and sanitary/zoosanitary status for evaluation purposes.



Article 1.3.4.12.

1. The *Veterinary Services* of a country may undertake self-evaluation against the above criteria for such purposes as national interest, improvement of internal efficiency or export trade facilitation. The way in which the results of self-evaluation are used or distributed is a matter for the country concerned.
2. A prospective *importing country* may undertake an evaluation of the *Veterinary Services* of an *exporting country* as part of a risk analysis process, which is necessary to determine the sanitary or zoosanitary measures which the country will use to protect human or animal life or health from disease or pest threats posed by imports. Periodic evaluation reviews are also valid following the commencement of trade.
3. In the case of evaluation for the purposes of *international trade*, the authorities of an *importing country* should use the principles elaborated above as the basis for the evaluation and should attempt to acquire information according to the model questionnaire. The *Veterinary Services* of the *importing country* are responsible for the analysis of details and for determining the outcome of the evaluation after taking into account all the relevant information. The relative ranking of importance ascribed, in the evaluation, to the criteria described in this document will necessarily vary according to case-by-case circumstances. This ranking should be established in an objective and justifiable way. Analysis of the information obtained in the course of an evaluation study must be performed in as objective a manner as possible. The validity of the information should be established and reasonableness should be employed in its application. The assessing country must be willing to defend any position taken on the basis of this type of information, if challenged by the other party.

Article 1.3.4.13.

This Article outlines appropriate information requirements for the self-evaluation or evaluation of the *Veterinary Services* of a country.

1. Organisation and structure of Veterinary Services

a) National Veterinary Services

Organisational chart including numbers, positions and numbers of vacancies.

b) Sub-national Veterinary Services

Organisational charts including numbers, positions and numbers of vacancies.

c) Other providers of Veterinary Services

Description of any linkage with other providers of *Veterinary Services*.

2. National information on human resources

a) Veterinarians

i) Total numbers of:

- veterinarians registered in the country who are graduates from internationally recognised veterinary schools which are registered accordingly in the WHO/FAO World Directory of Veterinary Schools;
- graduate veterinarians not included above.

ii) Numbers of:

- full time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- part time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- private veterinarians authorised by the *Veterinary Services* to perform official veterinary functions. *(Describe accreditation standards, responsibilities and/or limitations applying to these private veterinarians.)*

iii) Animal health:

Numbers associated with farm livestock sector on a majority time basis in a veterinary capacity, by geographical area *(Show categories and numbers to differentiate staff involved in field service, laboratory, administration, import/export and other functions, as applicable.):*

- full time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- part time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- privately-employed veterinarians.

iv) Veterinary public health:

Numbers employed in food inspection on a majority time basis, by commodity *(Show categories and numbers to differentiate staff involved in inspection, laboratory and other functions, as applicable.):*

- full time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- part time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- privately-employed veterinarians.

v) Numbers of veterinarians relative to certain national indices:

- per total human population;
- per farm livestock population, by geographical area;
- per livestock-farming unit, by geographical area.

vi) Veterinary education:

- number of veterinary schools;
- length of veterinary course (years);
- international recognition of veterinary degree.

b) Graduate staff (non-veterinarian)

Details to be provided by category (including biologists, biometricians, economists, engineers, lawyers, other science graduates and others) on numbers within national *Veterinary Services* and available to national *Veterinary Services*.

c) Technical assistants employed by the Veterinary Services

i) Animal health:

- Numbers involved with farm livestock on a majority time basis:
  - . by geographical area;
  - . proportional to numbers of field Veterinary Officers in the *Veterinary Services*, by geographical area.
- Education/training details.
- ii) Veterinary public health:
  - Numbers in food inspection on a majority time basis:
    - . meat inspection: export meat establishments with an export function and domestic meat establishments (no export function);
    - . dairy inspection;
    - . other foods.
  - Numbers in import/export inspection.
  - Education/training details.
- d) Support staff
 

Numbers directly available to *Veterinary Services* per sector (administration, communication, transport).
- e) Descriptive summary of the functions of the various categories of staff mentioned above
- f) Additional information and/or comments.
- 3. Financial management information
  - a) Total budgetary allocations to the *Veterinary Services* for the current and past two fiscal years:
    - i) for the national *Veterinary Services*;
    - ii) for each of any sub-national veterinary authorities;
    - iii) for other relevant government-funded institutions.
  - b) Sources of the budgetary allocations and amount:
    - i) government budget;
    - ii) sub-national authorities;
    - iii) taxes and fines;
    - i) grants;
    - v) private services.
  - c) Proportional allocations of the amounts in a) above for operational activities and for the programme components of *Veterinary Services*.
  - d) Total allocation proportionate of national public sector budget (*This data may be necessary for comparative assessment with other countries which should take into account the contexts of the importance of the livestock sector to the national economy and of the animal health status of the country.*).

- e) Actual and proportional contribution of animal production to gross domestic product.

#### 4. Administration details

##### a) Accommodation

Summary of the numbers and distribution of official administrative centres of the *Veterinary Services* (national and sub-national) in the country.

##### b) Communications

Summary of the forms of communication systems available to the *Veterinary Services* on a nation-wide and local area bases.

##### c) Transport

- i) Itemised numbers of types of functional transport available on a full-time basis for the *Veterinary Services*. In addition provide details of transport means available part-time.
- ii) Details of annual funds available for maintenance and replacement of motor vehicles.

#### 5. Laboratory services

##### a) Diagnostic laboratories (laboratories engaged primarily in diagnosis)

- i) Descriptive summary of the organisational structure and role of the government veterinary laboratory service in particular its relevance to the field *Veterinary Services*.
- ii) Numbers of veterinary diagnostic laboratories operating in the country:
  - government operated laboratories;
  - private laboratories accredited by government for the purposes of supporting official or officially-endorsed animal health control or public health testing and monitoring programmes and import/export testing.
- iii) Descriptive summary of accreditation procedures and standards for private laboratories.
- iv) Human and financial resources allocated to the government veterinary laboratories, including staff numbers, graduate and post-graduate qualifications and opportunities for further training.
- v) List of diagnostic methodologies available against major diseases of farm livestock (including poultry).
- vi) Details of collaboration with external laboratories including international reference laboratories and details on numbers of samples submitted.
- vii) Details of quality control and assessment (or validation) programmes operating within the veterinary laboratory service.
- viii) Recent published reports of the official veterinary laboratory service which should include details of specimens received and foreign animal disease investigations made.
- ix) Details of procedures for storage and retrieval of information on specimen submission and results.

- x) Reports of independent reviews of the laboratory service conducted by government or private organisations (if available).
    - xi) Strategic and operational plans for the official veterinary laboratory service (if available).
  - b) Research laboratories (laboratories engaged primarily in research)
    - i) Numbers of veterinary research laboratories operating in the country:
      - government operated laboratories;
      - private laboratories involved in full time research directly related to animal health and veterinary public health matters involving production animal species.
    - ii) Summary of human and financial resources allocated by government to veterinary research.
    - iii) Published programmes of future government sponsored veterinary research.
    - iv) Annual reports of the government research laboratories.
- 6. Functional capabilities and legislative support
  - a) Animal health and veterinary public health
    - i) Assessment of the adequacy and implementation of relevant legislation (national or sub-national) concerning the following:
      - animal and veterinary public health controls at national frontiers;
      - control of endemic animal diseases, including zoonoses;
      - emergency powers for control of exotic disease outbreaks, including zoonoses;
      - inspection and registration of facilities;
      - veterinary public health controls of the production, processing, storage and marketing of meat for domestic consumption;
      - veterinary public health controls of the production, processing, storage and marketing of fish, dairy products and other foods of animal origin for domestic consumption;
      - registration and use of veterinary pharmaceutical products including vaccines.
    - ii) Assessment of ability of *Veterinary Services* to enforce legislation.
  - b) Export/import inspection
    - i) Assessment of the adequacy and implementation of relevant national legislation concerning:
      - veterinary public health controls of the production, processing, storage and transportation of meat for export;
      - veterinary public health controls of production, processing, storage and marketing of fish, dairy products and other foods of animal origin for export;

- animal health and veterinary public health controls of the export and import of *animals*, animal genetic material, animal products, animal feedstuffs and other products subject to veterinary inspection;
- animal health controls of the importation, use and bio-containment of organisms which are aetiological agents of animal diseases, and of pathological material;
- animal health controls of importation of veterinary biological products including vaccines;
- administrative powers available to *Veterinary Services* for inspection and registration of facilities for veterinary control purposes (if not included under other legislation mentioned above);
- documentation and compliance.

ii) Assessment of ability of *Veterinary Services* to enforce legislation.

## 7. Animal health and veterinary public health controls

### a) Animal health

- i) Description of and sample reference data from any national animal disease reporting system controlled and operated or coordinated by the *Veterinary Services*.
- ii) Description of and sample reference data from other national animal disease reporting systems controlled and operated by other organisations which make data and results available to *Veterinary Services*.
- iii) Description and relevant data of current official control programmes including:
  - epidemiological surveillance or monitoring programmes;
  - officially approved industry-administered control or eradication programmes for specific diseases.
- iv) Description and relevant details of animal disease emergency preparedness and response plans.
- v) Recent history of animal disease status:
  - animal diseases eradicated nationally or from defined sub-national zones in the last ten years;
  - animal diseases of which the prevalence has been controlled to a low level in the last ten years;
  - animal diseases introduced to the country or to previously free sub-national regions in the last ten years;
  - emerging diseases in the last ten years;
  - animal diseases of which the prevalence has increased in the last ten years.

b) Veterinary public health

i) Food hygiene

- Annual national slaughter statistics for the past three years according to official data by species of animals (bovine, ovine, porcine, caprine, poultry, farmed game, wild game, equine and other).
- Estimate of total annual slaughterings which occur but are not recorded under official statistics.
- Proportion of total national slaughter which occurs in registered export establishments, by category of animal.
- Proportion of total national slaughter which occurs under veterinary control, by category of animal.
- Numbers of commercial fresh meat establishments in the country which are registered for export by national *Veterinary Services*.
  - . slaughterhouses (indicate species of *animals*);
  - . cutting/packing plants (indicate meat type);
  - . meat processing establishments (indicate meat type);
  - . cold stores.
- Numbers of commercial fresh meat establishments in the country approved by other *importing countries* which operate international assessment inspection programmes associated with approval procedures.
- Numbers of commercial fresh meat establishments under direct public health control of the *Veterinary Services* (including details of category and numbers of inspection staff associated with these premises).
- Description of the veterinary public health programme related to production and processing of animal products for human consumption (including fresh meat, poultry meat, meat products, game meat, dairy products, fish, fishery products, molluscs and crustaceans and other foods of animal origin) especially including details applying to exports of these *commodities*.
- Descriptive summary of the roles and relationships of other official organisations in public health programmes for the products listed above if the national *Veterinary Services* do not have responsibility for those programmes which apply to national production destined to domestic consumption and/or exports of the *commodities* concerned.

ii) Zoonoses

- Descriptive summary of the numbers and functions of staff of the *Veterinary Services* involved primarily with monitoring and control of zoonotic diseases.
- Descriptive summary of the role and relationships of other official organisations involved in monitoring and control of zoonoses to be provided if the national *Veterinary Services* do not have these responsibilities.

iii) Chemical residue testing programmes

- Descriptive summary of national surveillance and monitoring programmes for environmental and chemical residues and contaminants applied to animal-derived foodstuffs, *animals* and animal feedstuffs.
- Role and function in these programmes of the national *Veterinary Services* and other *Veterinary Services* to be described in summary form.
- Descriptive summary of the analytical methodologies used and their consistency with internationally recognised standards.

iv) Veterinary medicines

- Descriptive summary of the administrative and technical controls involving registration, supply and use of veterinary pharmaceutical products especially including biological products. This summary should include a focus on veterinary public health considerations relating to the use of these products in food-producing *animals*.
- Role and function in these programmes of the national *Veterinary Services* and other *Veterinary Services* to be described in summary form.

8. Quality Systems

a) Accreditation

Details and evidence of any current, formal accreditation by external agencies of the *Veterinary Services* of any components thereof.

b) Quality manuals

Documented details of the quality manuals and standards which describe the accredited quality systems of the *Veterinary Services*.

c) Audit

Details of independent (and internal) audit reports which have been undertaken of the *Veterinary Services* of components thereof.

9. Performance assessment and audit programmes

a) Strategic plans and review

- i) Descriptive summary and copies of strategic and operational plans of the *Veterinary Services* organisation.
- ii) Descriptive summary of corporate performance assessment programmes which relate to the strategic and operational plans - copies of recent review reports.

b) Compliance

Descriptive summary of any compliance unit which monitors the work of the *Veterinary Services* (or elements thereof).

c) Annual reports of the national Veterinary Services



Copies of official annual reports of the national (sub-national) *Veterinary Services*.

d) Other reports

- i) Copies of reports of official reviews into the function or role of the *Veterinary Services* which have been conducted within the past three years.
- ii) Descriptive summary (and copy of reports if available) of subsequent action taken on recommendations made in these reviews.

e) Training

- i) Descriptive summary of in-service and development programmes provided by the *Veterinary Services* (or their parent Ministries) for relevant staff.
- ii) Summary descriptions of training courses and duration.
- iii) Details of staff numbers (and their function) who participated in these training courses in the last three years.

f) Publications

Bibliographical list of scientific publications by staff members of *Veterinary Services* in the past three years.

g) Sources of independent scientific expertise

List of local and international universities, scientific institutions and recognised veterinary organisations with which the *Veterinary Services* have consultation or advisory mechanisms in place.

10. Membership of the OIE

State if country is a member of the OIE and period of membership.

11. Other assessment criteria